Elections SK

EVENT DELIVERY AND CLOSEDOWN

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
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EVENT DELIVERY AND CLOSEDOWN – ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT
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July 31, 2017

The Honourable Corey Tochor
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Room 129, Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3

Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to Section 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996*, I have the distinct privilege of presenting the Annual Report for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Saskatchewan) to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

This Annual Report highlights Office activities for the fiscal year period of April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017.

You will remember that the 28th Provincial General Election was underway in the early part of this reporting period, as election day occurred on April 4, 2016.

This annual report highlights the intense activity crescendo that is associated with the final stages of election delivery, as well as the range of closedown activities that follow each general election.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D. Boda

Michael Boda, D.Phil., Ph.D.
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

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"In retrospect, I am pleased to report that the 28th general election was an administrative success – to the credit of all involved in its professional delivery across 61 constituencies and at our head office."

– Dr. Michael Boda, Chief Electoral Officer

A Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

The period between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017 saw a tremendous range of activity levels within Elections Saskatchewan.

The fiscal year started during the final days of the 28th provincial general election campaign period. More than 12,000 temporary employees were employed by the election management body to provide voting services around the province on Election Day – April 4, 2016. However, at the end of March 2017 two temporary financial support staff were supplementing Elections Saskatchewan's core staff of 16 full-time personnel.

This feature of massive staffing expansion and contraction is what makes election administration so uniquely challenging and rewarding. No other peacetime public administration entity sees as large a change in the scope of activities as one responsible for the delivery of elections. When all the associated challenges are met with the application of rigorous planning and orderly management methods, the smooth delivery of the electoral process is the tangible reward provided. In retrospect, I am pleased to report that the 28th general election was an administrative success – to the credit of all involved in its professional delivery across 61 constituencies and at our head office.

A detailed description of the administrative delivery of the 28th general election is reported on in four volumes that make up my Chief Electoral Officer's Report:

- Statement of Votes;
- Administrative Review;
- Statement of Expenditures; and
- Legislative Change Recommendations.

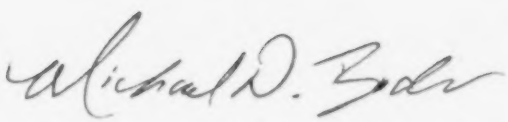
Dr. Michael Boda has been Chief Electoral Officer since June 1, 2012.

The focus of this Annual Report for FY 2016-17 is on how the six strategic goals of Elections Saskatchewan continued to be pursued during event delivery and closedown. This marks the last time that an annual report will be organized around the progress that the institution has made in delivering on the strategic plan that it set out in January 2014. A new strategic plan is currently under development and future annual reports will be oriented to discussing the efforts that are made to achieve a new set of goals and strategic objectives.

Input into Elections Saskatchewan's new strategic plan continues to come from various types of reviews with, and reports from, the organization's wide and diverse range of election stakeholders. A new strategic plan for Elections Saskatchewan will be published in the coming months and will define the direction the institution will pursue in the five-immediate future fiscal years.

This report also provides insights into the extensive range of closedown activities that are associated with each general election. In addition to post-event assessment activities, a very large volume of financial reporting from candidates and political parties must be carefully reviewed and audited prior to the calculation of expenditure reimbursements. As well, the portfolio of projects that define the process of getting 'election ready' must be reviewed and updated to reflect lessons learned from their most recent execution.

Meanwhile, the organization needs to maintain a state of readiness for on-demand electoral events. The by-election called for Saskatoon Meewasin late in the fiscal year was but one example of the need for Elections Saskatchewan to remain unceasingly agile and capable of responding professionally to the needs of administering electoral democracy as and when it is required.



Michael D. Boda, D. Phil., Ph.D.
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

Regina, Saskatchewan
June 1, 2017

ABOUT ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN

The many component parts involved in planning, organizing and implementing elections in Saskatchewan are overseen by what is described as an election management body (EMB).

Internationally, an EMB is defined as an independent, non-partisan institution that is responsible for impartial election administration within a jurisdiction governed as a democracy. In Canada, each province, territory, and the national jurisdiction has an EMB that impartially administers elections, upholds the democratic electoral rights guaranteed within the Canadian constitution, and conducts electoral events in accordance with applicable electoral legislation.

Elections Saskatchewan fulfills this mandate for the province, serving as the secretariat to the statutory Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Elections Saskatchewan has a leadership team based in Regina and dispersed across the province's 61 constituencies that each elect a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

In the months leading to a general election, Saskatchewan's electoral service grows steadily and during the election period includes approximately 12,000 temporary workers from all walks of life, each serving provincial voters in administering an event that is fundamental to sustaining Saskatchewan's democratic traditions.

VALUES

When creating the institution's strategic plan, Elections Saskatchewan's leadership team reflected on the values that are espoused by practitioners of election administration across Canada and around the world. In doing so, six core values were identified:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Innovation
- Service Orientation

These values remain at the foundation of every activity conducted by the institution, guiding the actions and decisions of all staff members. They are values widely shared by election administrators and are defining elements of a modern election management body.

STAKEHOLDERS

Elections Saskatchewan has a tremendously broad and diverse base of stakeholders who it affects and by whom it is affected. These include:

- Voters and prospective voters;
- New Canadians, seniors' groups and groups representing people with disabilities;
- Registered political parties (including their chief official agents and leadership contestants) and their constituency associations;
- Unregistered political parties and advocacy groups;
- Candidates for election and their business managers;
- Elected Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan;
- Members of the Legislature's Board of Internal Economy;
- Returning officers and election clerks;
- Voter registration officers, election officers, and other election support workers;
- Media representatives, reporters, columnists, bloggers, and contributors;
- Urban and rural municipal election officials;
- Academic researchers and analysts; and
- Electoral constituency boundary commissioners and their technical support staff.

Addressing the needs and concerns of these stakeholders is critical to the success of Saskatchewan's election management body and central to the institution's focus on service. Elections Saskatchewan's intent is to continually consult with its stakeholders to assess how well the institution is meeting their needs. Elections Saskatchewan is committed to identifying clear opportunities for improvement and the modernization of its services.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head Office Leadership Team

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is an independent officer of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. As head of Elections Saskatchewan, the CEO ensures the fair and equitable conduct of operational, administrative, and financial practices related to the electoral process. The CEO is assisted in these legislated responsibilities by a head office leadership team.

Elections Saskatchewan's primary responsibility is to maintain an appropriate state of provincial election readiness. To that end, Elections Saskatchewan must appoint and train requisite numbers of constituency returning officers and election officers to ensure electoral preparedness throughout each government's mandate, and to be fully ready for by-elections and scheduled general elections.

The Election Act, 1996 (the Election Act) also places a duty on the CEO to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents, and business managers to ensure the Election Act's financial transparency and disclosure goals are met. Elections Saskatchewan publishes guides for party chief official agents and candidate business managers to help them fulfill their administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, compile the necessary support documentation, and ensure their annual financial disclosures are filed in accordance with the Election Act and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Saskatchewan)*.

Where applicable, Elections Saskatchewan is responsible for assessing and reimbursing election expenses which are paid from the province's General Revenue Fund. Elections Saskatchewan has established a financial review system to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the examination and audit of registered political parties' and candidates' expense returns and required disclosure documentation. To promote transparency, expense return details are tabled in the Legislative Assembly and posted on Elections Saskatchewan's website.

Elections Saskatchewan is also responsible for investigating offences under the Election Act. While the Act is regulatory rather than criminal, the role of Elections Saskatchewan is to inspect, investigate, and inquire about instances where contravention of the Election Act is suspected or alleged, as deemed necessary by the CEO. Since this responsibility is a matter of considerable discretion and is often initiated by complaints filed by interested parties, it is incumbent upon Elections Saskatchewan to consider whether any specific situation has contravened the overall purpose, policy rationale, and/or legislative intent of the province's electoral legislation.

Elections Saskatchewan's Management Team

To ensure political stakeholders and the public are aware of important aspects of its role and mandate, Elections Saskatchewan maintains an outreach program that responds to public enquiries and liaises with registered political parties, candidates, and their chief official agents and business managers.

The CEO reports annually to the Legislative Assembly, via submission of a written report that is tabled by the Speaker, on matters related to administering the Election Act. In addition to such annual reporting, the CEO also prepares reports to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on all elections administered by his office. For the first time, the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the 28th Provincial General Election is being published in four separate volumes: 1) Statement of Votes, 2) Administrative Review, 3) Statement of Expenditures, and 4) Legislative Change Recommendations. Administrative and financial reporting for constituency by-elections are encapsulated in individual by-election reports.

The environment within which Elections Saskatchewan is accountable is unique and complex due to the potential timing uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of election administration, its requirement for an extremely large temporary workforce, and the interaction among registered political parties, candidates, media and the electorate. The integrated management of this highly decentralized process rests with Elections Saskatchewan and depends heavily on its impartial and effective administration of the process integrity controls contained in the Election Act.

The Field Leadership Team

While central election administration is the responsibility of Elections Saskatchewan's head office leadership team, the regional and constituency-level conduct of electoral events is the responsibility of the field leadership team.

Supervisory returning officers (SROs), each representing a different geographic zone of the province that comprises six to eight constituencies, are responsible for supporting returning officers within those constituencies in performing their duties. SROs act as a liaison between the head office and the constituency returning officers, and provide oversight to ensure electoral events are administered and conducted at a consistently high standard across the province in accordance with direction from Elections Saskatchewan's executive leadership.

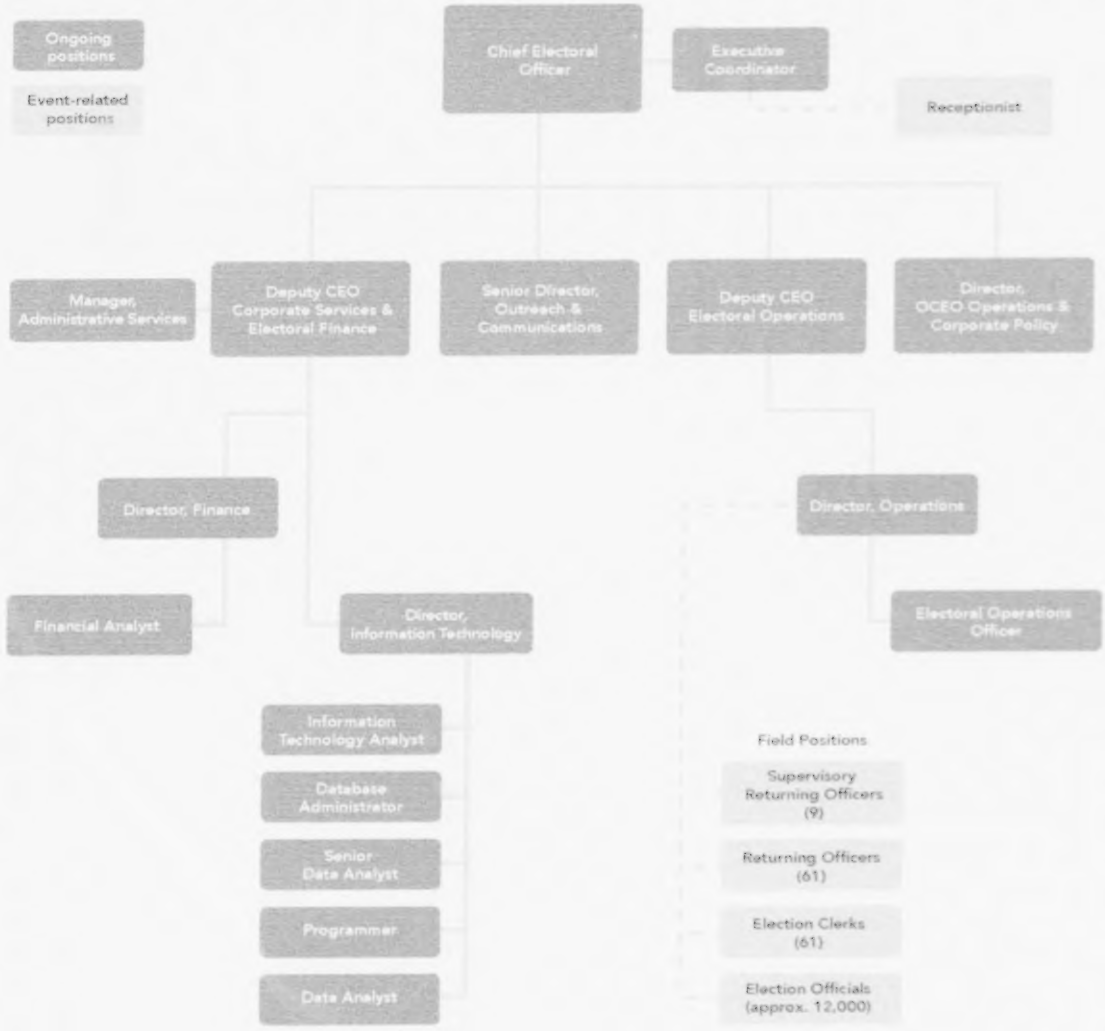
Representing Elections Saskatchewan at the local level, each constituency has a returning officer who is assisted by an election clerk. These two individuals are entrusted with upholding the neutrality of the province's decentralized electoral process within their constituency, and are responsible for the administration, conduct, and reporting of electoral proceedings for general elections, by-elections, referendums, and plebiscites.

An important part of achieving and maintaining election readiness is having constituency returning officers and election clerks appointed and in position within each of the province's 61 constituencies. The CEO appoints all provincial returning officers and election clerks. Notices of all returning officer appointments (or cancellations) are published in The Saskatchewan Gazette. Returning officer and election clerk vacancies are filled through independent merit-based competitions.

Some of Elections Saskatchewan's Field Leadership Team

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Elections Saskatchewan (2016-17)



EVENT DELIVERY AND CLOSEDOWN

The Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly's commissioned 2009 review[1] of the organizational structure and operational environment of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer led to the appointment of Dr. Michael Boda as the province's Chief Electoral Officer and head of Elections Saskatchewan on June 1, 2012.

In his first written submission to the Legislative Assembly, Dr. Boda outlined "a path for renewal"[2] – the approach by which the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer would alter its management methods, restructure its staffing, and evolve the institution's operation to be consistent with electoral best practice in Canada and in leading democratic jurisdictions around the world.

In the months that followed, through merit-based competitions, Dr. Boda recruited and hired the members of his leadership team–persons willing and capable of bringing about the changes required to modernize Saskatchewan's election delivery system. During the 2013-14 fiscal year, this team of managers reflected on their vision of what Elections Saskatchewan needed to stand for as an institution, committed itself to a set of core values, and created a strategic plan for the years 2014 to 2016 – what was then the remainder of Saskatchewan's 28th electoral cycle.

Throughout the 2016-17 fiscal year, Dr. Boda and his team have continued to pursue the vision, values, and goals outlined in that strategic plan while completing the conduct of the 28th provincial general election and the orderly closedown process that must follow. The following six sections of this report are structured to align with the primary goals the institution set for itself when it adopted that strategic plan. A new five-year strategic plan is currently being developed by Elections Saskatchewan and is expected to be published in 2017.

Fiscal year 2016-17 was characterized by the need for the institution to directly engage with voters and other electoral stakeholders in the final delivery of the 28th General Election. This was followed by various official reporting activities, auditing the financial returns submitted by candidates and registered political parties, providing reimbursement of election expenses to eligible political entities, and undertaking an orderly closedown and review of all aspects of the electoral event. Additionally, a by-election was called in the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin with election day occurring on March 2, 2017.

[1] Lloyd M. Hamilton, The Hamilton Report of the Review of the Operational Environment and Accountabilities of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer for Saskatchewan (The Hamilton Report) (Regina: March 2009).

[2] Michael D. Boda, Election Administration in Saskatchewan: "A Path for Renewal" (Estimates for Fiscal Year 2013-2014) (Regina: Elections Saskatchewan, January 2013).

Attracting and Retaining a Performance-Focused Team

Attract and retain a competent, inclusive, and performance-focused Elections Saskatchewan team.

During FY2016-17, Elections Saskatchewan witnessed its workforce grow to 12,628 and then shrink by more than 99.8 percent to its core of fewer than 20 permanent ongoing head office positions. Very few organizations, other than election management bodies, ever experience such a massive change in personnel requirements within a twelve-month period, let alone repeat the process on a regular basis.

At the start of the fiscal year, which was three days before election day for the 28th provincial general election, 39 temporary employees were supplementing Elections Saskatchewan's head office staff. At the constituency level, 131 supervisory returning officers, returning officers and election clerks in 61 separate returning offices throughout the province were supported by 816 temporary field-based election office workers. As of election day an additional 12,449 election officials and poll support workers had been employed by Elections Saskatchewan to administer voting services at 2,945 separate polls in 1,700 separate locations across Saskatchewan.

Per the requirements of legislation[1], all members of the field management team had seen their appointments end on October 27, 2016, precisely six months after the return of the writs for the 28th general election.

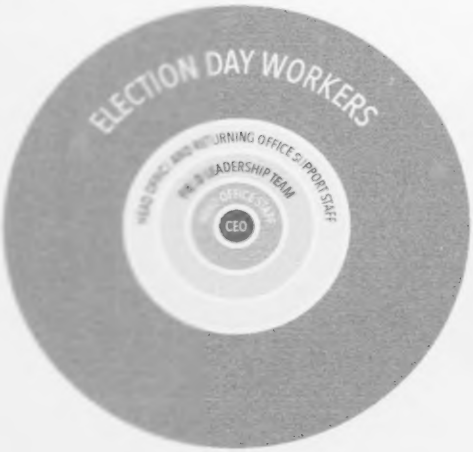
Recruitment of the Election Workforce

The "Elections Saskatchewan team" is, at its core, the ongoing personnel who work at the head office of the provincial election management body. Except for one analyst, and vacancies for the positions of director of finance and executive coordinator, the remainder of these 14 positions were filled with persons who were recruited in a previous fiscal year. The programmer analyst position was filled in the Fall of 2016 through a competitive recruitment process, while senior management decided that the director of finance position would be kept vacant until early in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Due to a strategic decision, the data analyst position will not be filled until the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Moving out from the core, the next ring of personnel are the members of the field management team. This includes one returning officer and one election clerk in each of the 61 constituencies, plus 9 supervisory returning officers (SROs), each covering a region that includes between six to eight constituencies. As was noted in the discussion above, appointments for the field management positions all expire six months after each general election per the requirements of legislation. During fiscal year 2016-17 there was no need to recruit members for SRO, returning officer or election clerk positions except for the case of Saskatoon Meewasin. In that case the previously appointed returning officer and election clerk were re-appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer.

[1] *The Election Act, 1996*, sections 30.1 and 50(6).

Staff Required for the 28th Provincial General Election



12,449 Election Day workers

855 Head Office and Returning Office support staff

131 Field Leadership Team members

14 Head office staff

1 Chief Electoral Officer

As of the end of the fiscal year, recruitment plans were underway to start the process of attracting supervisory returning officers within each region within the province. Appointments of all SROs are expected to be in place by the end of Summer 2017 and then the SROs will be involved with helping to implement the process of recruiting returning officers.

Moving to the next ring of personnel involves the more than 800 persons who worked in support of election administration at the head office and in each of the 61 returning offices. Except for approximately six financial analysts and auditors who were involved with reviewing the election finance returns required to be submitted by each candidate and political party, these temporary positions ended on or before the date that the returns of election writs occurred on April 27, 2016.

The final, and most populated, ring of personnel that are included in the Elections Saskatchewan team are the more than 12,000 election officers and poll support personnel who are needed to administer voting services to Saskatchewan citizens. Most of these individuals worked for exactly one day – election day, which occurred on April 4, 2016.

Very little recruitment of members of the election workforce took place during fiscal year 2016-17, as the very great majority had been recruited only weeks before the fiscal year started. Last minute recruitment of election officers for the general election did need to happen in some constituencies because of an outbreak of influenza. As well, a full slate of returning office support personnel and election officers needed to be recruited to provide voting services in the March 2017 by-election in the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin.

Two of the 12,449 election day workers around Saskatchewan.

'Retention' and a Four-Year Election Cycle

The requirements of election administration make the 'retention' portion of the stated goal of "attracting and retaining a performance-focused team" very challenging. The reality is that elections require a very small ongoing workforce between elections, but that must develop into a massive workforce, more than 600 times greater than the core, for one day per election cycle. Obviously, the preference would be to have the most qualified and capable temporary election workers – be they poll clerks, registration officers, poll supervisors or returning officers – return to provide their services to the voting public at each successive provincial election.

However, ensuring this 'return to service' every four years is becoming increasingly challenging. Some of the 'regular' personnel who could be depended on to work at each consecutive election in the past are aging and are finding that the long hours of overseeing every aspect of activities at a single ballot box are simply too demanding for them. Younger people are being recruited, but across Canada election administrators are finding that they will frequently work at one election and never return. Post-election surveys indicate that younger election workers find that administering the voting process is predominantly paper-oriented while every other aspect of their lives is predominantly automated and digitally-oriented – and for this reason they find election work frustrating and unrewarding. Most middle-aged persons claim they are too busy to take a day off from their regular jobs to work a 12 to 14-hour day serving the voting public in their community. More than half of the temporary electoral workforce is now new to election work at each provincial election, and this experience is reported to be very similar across every province in Canada.

To help address this challenge, Elections Saskatchewan has developed a database of contact information of all the persons who worked in the 28th provincial general election, as well as several thousand additional individuals who expressed an interest in working at the election (through a 'Take Part' campaign) but were not hired because sufficient personnel had been found at the local level. As the 29th general election approaches, Elections Saskatchewan will reach out to these persons, advise them of the election work opportunities in their local community, and encourage them to "give a day for democracy" and suggest to others that they join the effort.

Given the trend toward more first-time election workers at each successive election, the 'Take Part' program that Elections Saskatchewan conducted to help recruit a sufficient workforce being available in every community in the province will need to be further enhanced and promoted for the 29th general election. By the end of April 2016, there were a total of 14,471 names included in the Take Part list. Of these, 7,693 were the names of new persons who had not worked for Elections Saskatchewan at any previous election. Because the availability of persons interested in election work frequently does not align with the geographic areas where there is a shortage of identified workers, there is a need to further increase the size of the list of available, interested personnel. Across Canada, returning officers are identifying their primary concern is finding enough staff to administer the vote in every voting location within their constituency.

Two of the election day workers at the 1,700 polling locations across the province on election day.

Building Institutional Capacity

Continuously improve electoral management and build institutional capacity through disciplined planning and applied best practice.

Election administrators tend to measure experience by the number of general elections they have personally been involved in delivering. For most permanent head office staff members at Elections Saskatchewan, the 28th provincial general election was their very first.

The successful delivery of that general election, and of the orderly closedown activities that followed the event has enormously increased the institutional capacity of Elections Saskatchewan. This is a direct result of the collective understanding that has now been reached on the part of the head office leadership team.

The relative importance and actual urgency of the myriad of different managerial priorities that compete for attention during an electoral event have now been subjected to shared understanding by the core full-time staff of Elections Saskatchewan. This milestone achievement promises to increase both the efficiency and effectiveness of the work the head office team does in the years ahead.

Other significant capacity building activities that occurred in FY2016-17 are described under the following headings:

Tracking Issues from Escalation to Resolution

In anticipation of the range of expected questions, issues and complaints that occur at every election, Elections Saskatchewan management implemented issues management tracking software to record, monitor and track every escalated instance during the election.

During the writ period (March 8, 2016 to April 27, 2016), 7,360 issues were resolved. These records included issues or topics of elections information, enumeration, finance, payroll and general inquires to the public call centre. The discipline of using one common information resource for recording each of the issues that arose during the election greatly assisted in their orderly and timely resolution. No issues or complaints led to legal action, nor did any gain media attention or public controversy.

Election Issues Management Working Group

As part of the process of election planning, development of capacity to deal with the number of issues that it was expected would be escalated to the level of the Chief Electoral Officer needed to be developed. It was decided that a "virtual" team of seven election process and legal experts would be assembled to be "on call" to deal with the most serious issues that arose during the election period.

After the return of election writs, a final report by the lead advisor of the "Election Issues Management Working Group" indicated that 63 issues were dealt with by the virtual team and that a resolution to more than 90 percent of the issues was recommended and implemented within two hours of being referred to the team.

Election Assessment Activities

During the first few days of the 2016-17 fiscal year, experienced election administrators from jurisdictions across Canada were observing final election preparations and election day voting and vote counting processes across Saskatchewan.

Some of the members of Elections Saskatchewan's Technical Support Unit who assisted field and head office workers.

As well, immediately following the vote on April 4, 2016 a series of planned opinion surveys were conducted by the Social Sciences Research Laboratory of the University of Saskatchewan.

The results of these assessment activities will be reported in the Volume II report on the 28th general election, entitled "Administrative Review".

An example of the detailed planning that is conducted prior to an election.

Strategic Planning Sessions

Throughout the Fall of 2016 members of the head office leadership team, as well as representatives from the field leadership team, met in a series of four structured strategic planning sessions oriented to developing a new five-year plan for Elections Saskatchewan.

The pending by-election in Saskatoon Meewasin interrupted the completion of the plan's development, but that work will be resumed in the Summer of 2017 and the new strategic plan for Elections Saskatchewan will be published in 2017.

Electoral Event Planning Reviews

As is the norm for all election management bodies, the head office leadership team and the field leadership team met to 'debrief' on the 28th general election over two days of structured discussion. This post-election review conference was held in Moose Jaw on June 23 and 24, 2016 and resulted in three lists being created: 1) what worked well, 2) what needs adjustment and 3) what needs to be fundamentally re-designed from the ground up. Significantly, many of the items on the third list will require legislative changes to address.

Elections Saskatchewan's management team members presenting at post-election conference with the field leadership teams.

Facilitating Modernization of Electoral Legislation

STRATEGIC GOAL #5

Facilitate the modernization of Saskatchewan's electoral legislative framework.

Preparing the Chief Electoral Officer's Recommendations for Legislative Change

The presence of a new, skilled and managerially experienced (but not election experienced) head office team, carefully observing and directly facing the challenges posed by the current framework of electoral laws that prescribe virtually every detail of how provincial elections are to be administered, led to a very long list of concerns being recorded about election law in Saskatchewan.

On the one hand, the current Election Act and its supporting regulations are full of contradictions, inefficiencies and significantly outmoded approaches to record keeping, accounting and process management. Simply addressing these shortcomings would undoubtedly improve the workability of the province's current electoral legislation. On the other hand, the fundamentals of the prescribed voting services model are now showing serious signs of age – the approach was invented in the United Kingdom in the early 19th Century and its underlying design assumptions only have partial validity in 21st Century application. Identifying and implementing a modern replacement model for delivering voting services has far-reaching implications and will require making legal changes to the most central components and structures within provincial electoral law.

Throughout the fiscal year, Elections Saskatchewan has monitored the modernization efforts being recommended and implemented by Elections Canada, Elections Ontario, Elections New Brunswick, Elections Alberta and Elections British Columbia. Discussions held in November 2016 and March 2017 by Chief Electoral Officers who lead election management bodies across Canada have resulted in agreement that a standardized approach to modernizing the voting services model is a highly desirable objective. The primary reasons for pursuing a standardized approach are to allow effective cost-sharing arrangements regarding the use of information technology, and facilitate the shared development of effective e-learning modules for use in training temporary election workers across the country. Further discussions on how to facilitate 'standardized' modernization is scheduled to occur during CEO meetings that will be held in the Summer and Fall of 2017.

Members of the field leadership team meeting at post-election conference.

Suggesting Reform of Referendum/ Plebiscite Rules and 2020 Provincial/ Municipal Election Timing

Two other circumstances presented themselves during fiscal year 2016-17 and resulted in the Chief Electoral Officer providing 'thought leadership' by preparing discussion papers on recommended legislative changes. Those discussion papers were submitted to elected representatives of both the Government and Opposition sides in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

The first circumstance arose from a public discussion and debate that started shortly after the 28th election on the topic of a potential sale of SaskTel, a publicly owned Crown Corporation. The Premier made statements to media indicating that any such sale would be subject to voter approval via a public referendum, indicating to Elections Saskatchewan that some preliminary preparations for such an electoral event was both prudent and necessary.

Upon learning the province's referendum and plebiscite legislative and regulatory framework had never envisioned a public vote of this type to be held outside of a general election period, the Chief Electoral Officer initiated research on the available options and administrative models appropriate if a provincial public consultation vote was required to take place between elections. Postal voting was the methodology the Chief Electoral Officer ultimately recommended, preferring it over:

a) waiting to hold the referendum/plebiscite vote in conjunction with a provincial election;

b) holding an in-person vote between elections using the same methods as for a general election, or

c) administering the referendum/plebiscite using internet and/or telephone voting methods.

The resulting CEO discussion paper, entitled 'Considerations for Modernizing Referendum and Plebiscite Rules and Facilitating Operational Readiness at Elections Saskatchewan', was delivered to Government and Opposition Leaders in mid-September 2016. No legislative initiative that would permit a provincial referendum (or plebiscite) to be held between general elections was introduced in the Legislative Assembly during the remainder of the fiscal year.

The second circumstance that led to a 'Chief Electoral Officer's Discussion Paper' was a realization that the five-month delay in the holding the 28th provincial general election (required by *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*) had inadvertently resulted in another election overlap being scheduled to occur in the future. In the Fall of 2020, municipal elections are legally required to be held across the province – in the same timeframe, the 29th provincial election period is also scheduled by statute to be underway.

Electoral Saskatchewan's Legislative Reform Committee of Ed Kilbourn, Gordon Barnhart, Michael Boda, Ruth Archer and Dale Eisler.

Working with various municipal election administrators from around the province, the Chief Electoral Officer identified three distinct options that would provide a long-term solution to the election timing problem. Senior municipal and provincial election administrators agreed that having concurrent election periods is untenable from an electoral event management perspective, and likely politically undesirable as well due to predictable levels of public confusion. A CEO discussion paper resulted from the consultations and research work undertaken to identify a recommendation. The paper, entitled 'Resolving the Municipal/Provincial Election Timing Problem in Saskatchewan', was developed in the final months of the 2016-17 fiscal year, but was not scheduled to be delivered to Government and Opposition Members of the Legislative Assembly until the first month of the following fiscal year.

Cooperation Between Electoral Jurisdictions

As mentioned in the discussion above regarding the development of the Chief Electoral Officer's election report dealing with fundamental legislative change recommendations, the context of such change is being contemplated by election management bodies across Canada.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, Mr. Greg Essensa, was a guest speaker at the Annual Meeting of Saskatchewan Registered Political Parties that was held on June 14, 2016. Mr. Essensa gave a presentation on the technology-enabled staffing model that is being introduced for Ontario provincial elections, starting with their next provincial election in June of 2018.

In July 2016, Chief Electoral Officers from across Canada met in Toronto for a multi-day conference centered on the theme of 'innovation' in the context of legislatively prescriptive election procedures. These meetings laid the foundation for subsequent discussion in November 2016 among Chief Electoral Officers that led to the development of a working group mandated to offer a model whereby modernization efforts could be effectively coordinated between jurisdictions.

In early March 2017, Chief Electoral Officers in charge of election management bodies in Canada's 14 major jurisdictions gave their agreement in principle to the development of a Terms of Reference and a Memorandum of Understanding to create and fund a 'Secretariat for Electoral Coordination'.

In addition to the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of developing a 'standardized' approach to a modernized voting services model across the country, there is a recognition that legislative provisions will need to be carefully aligned and coordinated to take full advantage of the opportunities for synchronized evolution of election administration in Canada.

Ontario CEO Greg Essensa speaking at the Annual Meeting of Saskatchewan Registered Political Parties.

Leveraging Technology

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

Innovate and improve services by leveraging technology.

Election Management is Information Management

There was one thing that became very clear during the final delivery and orderly closedown of the 28th provincial general election – elections involve managing and processing very large, dynamic collections of information.

Before the election, returning officers determined the physical locations of each of the polling stations, and entered this information into a shared data repository. The new computerized register of voters was used to produce voters lists, which were transmitted to each constituency returning office and made available to political parties and nominated candidates. Voter Information Cards (VICs) were then printed and mailed to each household.

On election night, votes cast on paper ballots were initially counted and recorded by hand, but the results tallies for each counted ballot box were collated in a central electronic database. As the results per ballot box entered the database they were re-totaled per constituency and provided electronically to the media. At the same time, progressive and cumulative voting results for each constituency were provided via continuously updated results pages on the Elections Saskatchewan website.

Identified Need for an Integrated Election Management System

Elections Saskatchewan delivered the 28th general election with a combination of legacy, new and ad hoc information systems. While there had not been sufficient time to consider integrating these systems, or developing, adopting or commercially acquiring a single 'election management system' (EMS) prior to the 2016 election, post-election priority was given to identifying what the business needs would be for adopting an effective EMS in Saskatchewan.

After you vote, your name is manually crossed off a printed voters list during advance voting and election day voting.

Following the election, a business analyst was hired to work with the managers in each of Elections Saskatchewan's service lines to identify how all the required and highly dynamic information associated with an election period could be most efficiently collected and processed in a system specifically designed for combined head office and field office use. An integrated EMS needs to be fully operational and available to returning officers around the province during a period that starts a few months before writs of election are issued and extends until immediately after each constituency writ is returned to the Chief Electoral Officer.

Development of a Register of Voters Maintenance Application

Legislation amending the Election Act, passed in May 2014, required that a 'final' enumeration of voters be undertaken and that an 'interim' register of voters be established in advance of the 28th general election.[4] That process was successfully undertaken with the assistance of a contracted register development team, and at the conclusion of the 2016 election 764,264 voter registration records were contained in a the newly created register of voters ready for a maintenance process to be developed to keep the information current and ready to be used in a by-election as well as [illegible] the 29th general election.

The register of voters maintenance application that is being developed, known as "RoVER", will allow head office administrative staff to look up the registration record of any voter who wishes to confirm or update their information, as well remove registration records of persons who are reported deceased by a family member. Additionally, per the requirements of legislation,[5] individuals will be able to request to see or be given a copy of their own computerized provincial voter registration record and the system will facilitate this information being efficiently and securely shared with those requesting it.

At the end of the 2016-17 fiscal year, testing of the first release of the RoVER application was underway. During the remainder of the development project period, scheduled to end in November 2017, additional functionality will be built into the maintenance application to support the automated updating of register records using other well-maintained public sector information collections, such as the National Register of Electors (NRoE) maintained by Elections Canada, and Saskatchewan health registrations maintained by eHealth Saskatchewan.

Additionally, the RoVER system will support the annual production of voters lists for registered political parties, and elected Members of the Legislative Assembly, who have signed an information sharing agreement with the Chief Electoral Officer. The permitted access and allowed use of the voters list information derived from the provincial register of voters is prescribed by legislation.[6]

Voters can update their own voter information via the Elections Saskatchewan website.

[4] *The Election Act, 1996*, section 18.3(3)
[5] *Ibid*, section 18.6
[6] *Ibid*, sections 18.8 and 17.1(4).

Piloting of Electronic Poll Books and Mobile Technology During By-election

The future of voting in Canada seems likely to see the introduction of information technology in voting locations. New Brunswick has adopted a technology-enabled voting process for both its municipal and provincial elections. Ontario is introducing technology at the polls for its 2018 provincial election. Other jurisdictions, including Alberta, British Columbia and Canada, have all made recommendations for legislative change that would permit the introduction of technology to support the voting and ballot counting process at their subsequent elections.

During the Saskatoon Meewasin by-election, which occurred during February and March of 2017, Elections Saskatchewan piloted two initiatives that involved the use of technology in ways that had never previously occurred during a provincial election. The first was the 'real-time' computerized registration of voters at personal care homes, supplemented with the use of mobile printing technology that allowed the production and delivery of a Voter Information Card (VIC) to each registrant within moments of their registration. The second was a 'parallel' process of checking voter registration credentials and 'striking off' the names of voters using an e-poll book process that was done alongside the fully manual process prescribed in legislation.

Both pilot projects were considered very successful, with the mobile registration and VIC card production providing some immediate efficiencies. More information on these processes and the promise they hold for streamlining operations in future elections will be included in the report on the Saskatoon Meewasin by-election that will be published after all the electoral finance reports have been processed and candidate and political expense reimbursements are made.

Computing Infrastructure and Application Improvements

In the earliest days of the fiscal year, the organizational focus was on the general election and the orderly reporting of voting results. Elections Saskatchewan's website was transformed into a 'microsite' that was solely dedicated to information specific to the general election. The voting results pages were integrated with the systems being used to collect and tally the cumulative totals being reported from each of the numbered ballot boxes per constituency. The Elections Saskatchewan website is now the organization's most effective information dissemination tool, and is considered more important than election-related messaging delivered through paid advertising.

A by-election was held in the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin on March 2, 2017.

During FY 2016-17 an intranet was designed and developed for use by members of the field leadership team between elections, and by the support personnel in each of the 61 constituency returning offices that are established during elections. During the development process a focus group of field leaders was included in specification, design and testing of the final product. The intranet will permit secure, centralized access by field staff to critical and time-sensitive information needed at each electoral event and significantly reduce the amount of redundant data individually collected by field managers during the 28th general election. The files that will be made available on the intranet will all be integrated with the office automation tools provided to field managers and support staff.

As well, during the year IT made changes to the Electoral Management System (ELMS) used by candidates' business managers and the financial managers of registered political parties to record electoral finance details that they are required to disclose. These changes were focused on improvements to the user experience based on feedback that had been received from persons who had used the system during and following the 2016 election. The 28th general election was the first time candidates used ELMS, resulting in engaged business managers testing the system and then Elections Saskatchewan immediately implementing these changes in time for the Meewasin by-election.

Partnering to Deliver Electoral Events and Services

Partner and collaborate with other organizations to enhance effectiveness in the delivery of electoral events and services.

During FY2016-17, Elections Saskatchewan's organizational partnership activities were primarily oriented to the conclusion and closedown of the 28th general election.

Voter education was enhanced because of a partnership with CIVIX and their education program called Student Vote Saskatchewan for the 2016 provincial election. As part of this elections education program, more than 20,000 Saskatchewan students cast a Student Vote ballot in a mock classroom election, representing 270 schools in all 61 constituencies.

Willowgrove participating in Student Vote 2016. Results to be announced April 4 at 8pm.

Saskatchewan elementary school students participating in Student Vote 2016.

Election participation was undoubtedly supported because of partnership activities with Saskatchewan media organizations, who provided excellent information to the public about voting qualifications, the ability to register at the time of voting and the importance of voting participation in a democracy. To assist media in their electoral event reporting, Elections Saskatchewan provided photos, video, images and key election numbers and statistics via the Elections Saskatchewan website.

While oriented to future electoral events, other partnership arrangements continued to provide considerable value to Elections Saskatchewan throughout fiscal year 2016-17:

- Some Elections Saskatchewan staff worked the municipal election in Regina while other staff observed the elections in Regina, Saskatoon and Swift Current;
- Regular exchange of voter registration information was conducted with Elections Canada;
- Exchanges of lists of consenting[1] election workers were made with Saskatchewan municipalities and Elections Canada; and
- Data sharing agreements were developed with eHealth, SGI and SaskTel for maintaining voter and address registers.

[1] To protect personal information privacy, the standardized appointment form used by all these jurisdictional bodies asks for the consent of election workers to share their information with other election management bodies.

Increasing Accessibility and Public Awareness

Increase accessibility, public awareness, and knowledge of the electoral process.

At no point in the electoral cycle are the issues of accessibility, awareness and public knowledge about the electoral process more critical that at voting time during a general election.

During the very first days of the 2016-17 fiscal year, Elections Saskatchewan was engaged in the following activities which were directly related to meeting this goal:

- Advising the disability community and the public of 15 election day voting locations that were not fully wheelchair accessible – 98.9 percent of the total 1,700 voting locations used met all desired accessibility criteria;
- Training persons with disabilities to act as poll officials and information officers in voting locations across the province, facilitating a public demonstration of the importance of this community's inclusion in the electoral process;
- Processing ballots for inclusion in the final vote count for the 574 voters who made use of homebound voting services;
- Distributing the Voters Guide in English, in 12 alternate languages, in a large print version, First Nations version and an audio version;
- Hanging large posters describing Saskatchewan Voter Rights and What Happens Inside at the entrance of every voting location in the province;

SASKATCHEWAN
VOTER RIGHTS
• Be a Canadian citizen.
• Be at least 18 years old, and
• Have lived in Saskatchewan for at least the six months before the day the election is called.
• Ask for assistance marking your ballot if you are unable to do so.
• Ask your employer for three consecutive hours off work to vote if your work schedule does not provide for three consecutive hours while the voting places are open.
• Be registered on the voters list as a voter.
• Decline your ballot and have it recorded as such.
• Have an interpreter assist you.
• Keep your vote secret.
• Request a new ballot if you accidentally damage or destroy the one you have been given.
• Request instruction on how to mark and fold the ballot.
• Request to vote immediately outside the voting place if you are physically unable to enter the voting place.
• Review your own information on the voters list and apply for revisions.
• Vote if you are waiting in line when the voting place closes, and
• Vote privately and free of interference.
ELECTION DAY IS APRIL 4, 2016

- Making I Voted and Future Voter stickers available for everyone who attended a voting location; and
- Promoting selfie walls where voters could take photos of themselves outside of the polling station and share it with their social media followers.

However, Elections Saskatchewan's efforts to improve the general public's awareness and knowledge of the electoral process did not end with the conclusion of voting at the 28th general election:

- The Chief Electoral Officer prepared and distributed an editorial opinion column ("Encouraging Voter Participation") to provincial media outlets on the date that the Statement of Votes for the 28th general election was tabled in the Legislature;
- Annual meetings with the Chief Official Agents of the province's six registered political parties were continued post-election, with a meeting held on June 14, 2016; and
- The Elections Saskatchewan website and Twitter page were continually updated until the election result in every constituency was verified and the Members of the Legislative Assembly were sworn into office.

To encourage voting in today's social media world, "selfie walls" were produced and set up outside of polling places across Saskatchewan.

I VOTED and FUTURE VOTER stickers were handed out at polling places around the province.

Measuring Strategic Plan Performance

When it was developed in FY2013-14, Elections Saskatchewan's strategic plan represented a new way of thinking, developing, documenting, and delivering on the institution's mandate.

This plan:

- Described the core values the institution strives to uphold;
- Identified the stakeholders the institution serves;
- Outlined the vision, role and mission of the institution; and
- Set out six strategic goals and 24 supporting objectives, thereby establishing the foundation of the institution's master work plan for the period covered by the strategic plan.

Following the development of Elections Saskatchewan's three-year strategic plan, the members of the head office leadership team proceeded to develop three years of annual performance measures that would be indicative of the extent of progress being achieved in reaching the organization's six strategic goals. These three years of measures were published in the 2013-14 annual report, and a commitment was made to report on actual results, per applicable measure, for each of the three years of the strategic plan's duration.

The table on the following pages provide the results for the third year of strategic performance measurement, which represents the final year for the strategic plan that the institution committed to in January 2014. They indicate that during FY2016-17 four measures were fully achieved, one was partially achieved and one measure was not achieved. Another measure, which could not be taken during the last fiscal year because of the election delay, was also achieved.

A new five-year strategic plan for Elections Saskatchewan is currently in the final stages of development. The approach to annually measuring organizational performance against the new plan's strategic goals will be detailed in the 2017-18 annual report, along with the performance measures for that reporting period.

2016-2017 Fiscal Year Performance Measures and Results

Strategic Goal	2016-17 Performance Measure	Results
#1 Attract and retain a competent, inclusive, and performance-focused Elections Saskatchewan team.	Head office attrition rate of less than 32 percent (4 persons); field leadership team attrition rate no longer applicable (these term positions end six months after each election).	Achieved. No members of the head office permanent staff of Elections Saskatchewan resigned their positions in FY2016-17.
#2 Continuously improve electoral management and build institutional capacity through disciplined planning and applied best practice.	75 percent of 28th cycle electoral projects are reframed or updated for the 29th cycle and take advantage of knowledge gained and lessons learned.	Achieved. Following the general election, a project was undertaken to identify the content of a 'portfolio' of projects that would need to be undertaken in preparing and delivering the 29th provincial election. The experience with the plans used in the 28th electoral cycle significantly informed the new planning details.
#3 Facilitate the modernization of Saskatchewan's electoral legislative framework.	Facilitate the modernization of Saskatchewan's electoral legislative framework.	Partially achieved. Chief Electoral Officer discussion papers were prepared for Government and Opposition MLAs on the topics of referendum and plebiscite legislative renewal and modification of the 29th provincial election schedule. The Chief Electoral Officer's comprehensive report on legislative change recommendations will be tabled in the legislative assembly during the fall of 2017. The funding required to undertake initial operational planning of a modernized voting services model was approved by the Board of internal economy for FY2017-18.

Strategic Goal	2016-17 Performance Measure	Results
#4 Innovate and improve services by leveraging technology.	Ensure all registrations taken during the enumeration and election period (list revision and registrations at the time of voting) are collected into a well-designed computer repository able to provide a solid basis for a continuously maintained voter registry, should legislation be adopted to change public policy on voter registration.	Achieved. The provincial register of voters was populated with 764,264 voter registration records following the 28th General Election. This represented 94 percent of the estimated 812,224 eligible voters living in Saskatchewan as of April 4, 2016. The database structures for the register were fully established before the election period started, and development of a voter registry maintenance application resumed immediately following the election.
#5 Partner and collaborate with other organizations to enhance effectiveness in the delivery of electoral events and services.	80 percent of temporary election staff indicate they are willing to serve in a support role during a subsequent election at the municipal or federal level, and that their contact information can be shared for this purpose.	Not achieved. At the April 2016 general election, just over half of temporary election staff (52.45%) indicated their willingness to have their contact information shared with federal or municipal EMBs. For the March 2017 Saskatoon Meewasin by-election, just under half of the election workers (44.16%) were willing to have their personal information shared for this purpose.

Strategic Goal	2016-17 Performance Measure	Results
#6 Increase accessibility, public awareness, and knowledge of the electoral process.	Statistically reliable post-election survey analysis indicates that 90 percent of Saskatchewan residents eligible to vote were aware of opportunities available to them for registration and voting participation.	Achieved. A post-election survey was undertaken by the Social Sciences Research Laboratory (SSRL) of the University of Saskatchewan, and it included 1,205 voters and 1,200 non-voters randomly selected from across the province. Some 94 percent of those who voted were fully aware of the dates, times and locations where they could vote, while just over 90 percent of non-voters also knew these details. More than 90 percent of the survey respondents were already registered and reported they had received their Voter Information Card (VIC) in the mail.
	(From FY2015-16) Targeted advertising and public education efforts focused on voting opportunities and accessibility to provincial voter registration and voting procedures helps end a two-decade trend of declining voting participation at successive provincial elections.	Achieved. Voter turnout increased marginally during the 28th general election, with 53.5 percent of eligible voters having voted compared to 51.1 percent of those eligible who voted in the 2011 provincial general election.

A New Five-Year Strategic Plan for Elections Saskatchewan

The plan that Elections Saskatchewan has been using to set its organizational direction and articulate its strategic priorities since January 2014 formally expired at end of the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Work on developing a new five-year strategic plan began in the Summer of 2016. A strategic planning consultant was contracted to facilitate a series of planning sessions with members of both the field and head office leadership teams and with all permanent staff during the Fall and Winter of 2016-17. The original scheduling intention had been for the new strategic plan to be finalized and published in 2017.

A new Elections Saskatchewan strategic plan, effective for the period of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2022, will be published in the Fall of 2017.

Financial Summary

The work of an election management body differs fundamentally from that of most other public service organizations in that it operates on a four-year electoral cycle, rather than an annual cycle. As such, it incurs costs associated with the ongoing operations of the institution as well as costs associated with the delivery of electoral events that happen either on a schedule set out in statute (i.e., general elections and boundary redistributions) or on-demand (i.e., by-elections and referenda).

Elections Saskatchewan's FY2016-17 budget estimates distinguish between these on-going administration costs and event-related costs. In most instances, the former expenditures will remain relatively constant over time while the latter costs will fluctuate and peak in the 12-month period that immediately follows a general election call. Because the 28th general election writs were issued on March 8, 2016 and the new fiscal year started on April 1, the election period fell into both fiscal years.

For FY2016-17, Elections Saskatchewan's event-related expenditures were focused on two electoral event components: the conclusion of voting in, and voting results reporting for, the 28th Provincial General Election; and the election expense financial filings of political parties and candidates, as well as reimbursements to those who were eligible to receive them. The event budget was developed by creating detailed plans for what the institution needed to achieve by the end of the fiscal year, grouping the activities into these two electoral components, and then determining resource requirements for each activity and estimating their associated costs.

A complete financial report of Elections Saskatchewan's expenditures during the fiscal year is provided at Appendix A, which appears on the pages that immediately follow.

A summarized view of Elections Saskatchewan's fiscal activity during FY2016-17 is set out in the table below:

Elections Saskatchewan Total Expenditures vs. Budget, Fiscal Year 2016-2017

	Budget	Actual
Ongoing Administration Costs	$ 2,675,586	$ 2,939,856
Event-Related Costs	$ 12,392,414	$ 10,785,721
Total	**$ 15,068,245**	**$ 13,725,577**

APPENDICES

A. Elections Saskatchewan Financial Statements 2016-17
B. Registered Political Parties
C. Annual Financial Reporting by Political Parties
D. Saskatchewan's Political Contributions Tax Credit System
E. Annual Tax Credit Reporting

Elections SK

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The accompanying financial statements are the responsibility of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (the Office). They have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

The Office maintains appropriate systems of internal control, including policies and procedures, which provide reasonable assurance that the Office's assets are safeguarded and that financial records are relevant and reliable.

The Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan conducts an independent audit of the financial statements. That examination is conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and includes tests and other procedures that allow the Provincial Auditor to report on the fairness of the financial statements.

Michael Boda, D.Phil., Ph.D.
Chief Electoral Officer
Province of Saskatchewan

Jennifer Colin, CMA, CIA
Deputy Chief Electoral Officer
Corporate Services & Electoral Finance

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PROVINCIAL AUDITOR
of Saskatchewan

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To: The Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2017, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, change in net debt, and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer as at March 31, 2017, and the results of its operations, changes in its net debt, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Judy Ferguson

Regina, Saskatchewan
July 6, 2017

Judy Ferguson, FCPA, FCA
Provincial Auditor

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APPENDIX A:

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT MARCH 31

STATEMENT 1

	2017	2016
Financial Assets		
Due from the General Revenue Fund	$ 868,724	$ 4,869,024
Accounts Receivable	12,817	14,999
	881,541	4,884,023
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	697,777	4,669,824
Accrued Employee Costs	183,764	214,199
	881,541	4,884,023
Net Debt	-	-
Non-financial Assets		
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	1,590,532	1,264,742
Prepaid Expenses	8,555	6,248
	1,599,087	1,270,990
Accumulated Surplus (Statement 2)	$ 1,599,087	$ 1,270,990

APPENDIX A:

STATEMENT 2

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

	2017		2016
	Budget (Note 6)	Actual	Actual
Revenue			
General Revenue Fund	$ 15,068,000	$ 13,714,713	$ 15,493,071
Miscellaneous Income	-	10,864	6,362
Total Revenue	15,068,000	13,725,577	15,499,433
Expenses			
Operating:			
Salaries and Benefits	1,692,665	1,681,541	1,574,228
Contractual Services	425,925	712,465	374,652
Communications and Advertising	21,200	102,780	36,248
Employee Travel	57,309	57,833	38,943
Supplies and Services	318,896	246,922	245,236
Office Rent, Insurance and Utilities	369,363	364,515	338,513
Equipment	61,058	228,912	128,349
Amortization (Note 4)	332,000	337,057	208,383
Total Operating Expense	3,278,416	3,732,025	2,944,552
Events:			
2016 General Election Costs (Note 10) (Schedule 1)	11,406,284	9,280,113	12,183,159
2017 Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election Costs (Note 11) (Schedule 2)	-	385,342	-
2014 Lloydminster By-Election Costs (Schedule 3)	-	-	3,102
Total Events Expense	11,406,284	9,665,455	12,186,261
Total Expenses	14,684,700	13,397,480	15,130,813
Operating Surplus	$ 383,300	$ 328,097	$ 368,620
Accumulated Surplus, beginning of year		1,270,990	902,370
Accumulated Surplus, end of year (Statement 1)		$ 1,599,087	$ 1,270,990

APPENDIX A:

STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

STATEMENT 3

	2017	2016
Operating Surplus	$ 328,097	$ 368,620
Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	(662,847)	(588,255)
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	337,057	208,383
Change in Prepaid Expenses	(2,307)	11,252
Increase (Decrease) in Net Debt	-	-
Net Debt, beginning of year	-	-
Net Debt, end of year	$ -	$ -

APPENDIX A:

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

STATEMENT 4

	2017	2016
Cash from (used for) operating activities:		
General Revenue Fund appropriation received	$ 17,723,451	$ 11,462,127
Salaries and benefits paid	(2,407,016)	(2,448,062)
Supplies and other expenses paid	(14,651,281)	(8,437,062)
Cash from operating activities	665,154	577,003
Cash from (used for) capital activities:		
Purchase of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	(662,847)	(588,255)
Change in Prepaid Expenses	(2,307)	11,252
Cash used for capital activities	(665,154)	(577,003)
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	$ -	$ -

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2017

1. Authority and Purpose

The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislative Assembly and is appointed by resolution of the Assembly. The mandate of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (Office) is to administer provincial elections, enumerations and provincial election finances under *The Election Act, 1996*. The Office maintains the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure regime under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, and administers referenda, plebiscites and time votes according to *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act and The Time Act*. The net cost of the operations of the Office is borne by the General Revenue Fund of the Province of Saskatchewan.

2. Summary of Accounting Policies

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. These statements do not include a Statement of Remeasurement Gains and Losses as the Office has no activities that give rise to remeasurement gains or losses. As a result, its accumulated surplus is the same as its accumulated operating surplus.

The following policies are considered significant:

(a) Reporting Entity – The reporting entity is the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for which the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible.

(b) Revenue – The Office receives statutory appropriations from the General Revenue Fund to carry out its work. General Revenue Fund appropriations are included in revenue when amounts are spent or committed.

(c) Tangible Capital Assets – Tangible capital assets are reported at cost less accumulated amortization. All capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over a life of three to ten years. Work in progress (WIP) is not amortized until completed and placed in service for use.

(d) Accrued Employee Costs – Accrued employee costs include the salary, vacation, and severance owed to staff of the Office at year end.

(e) Use of Estimates – These statements are prepared in conformity with Canadian public sector accounting standards. These principles require management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the period. Actual results could differ from those estimates. Differences are reflected in current year operations when identified.

3. Amendments to Standards

Standard amendments that may impact the Office and are not yet effective for the year ended March 31, 2017 have not been applied in preparing these financial statements. In particular, the following standard amendments are effective for fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2017 and April 1, 2018.

PS 2200, Related Party Disclosures
PS 3210, Assets
PS 3320, Contingent Assets
PS 3380, Contractual Rights
PS 3420, Inter-Entity Transactions
PS 3430, Restructuring Transactions

The Office is currently evaluating the impact of these amendments on the financial statements but does not anticipate a significant impact on operations from adoption.

4. Tangible Capital Assets

The recognition and measurement of tangible capital assets is based on their service potential. These assets will not provide resources to discharge liabilities of the Office.

Assets under construction are recorded as work in progress (WIP) until they are ready to use. At that time, they are transferred from WIP to the respective asset class. The first module of the Permanent Voter Registry was completed and used during the 2016 General Election. Amortization was taken for the full year on the total project cost as of March 31, 2017.

Notes to the Financial Statements March 31, 2017 (Continued)

Table 1 – Tangible Capital Assets

	2017							2016
	Hardware & Software	Machinery & Equipment	Office Equipment	Furniture & Building Improvements	System Development	(WIP 5K) Permanent Voter Registry	Total	Total
Cost:								
Beginning of year	$ 223,256	$ 28,270	$ 57,387	$ 739,676	$ 289,465	$ 864,817	$ 2,202,871	$ 1,614,616
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	662,847	662,847	588,255
Transfers	-	-	-	-	1,527,664	(1,527,664)	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
End of year	223,256	28,270	57,387	739,676	1,817,129	-	2,865,718	2,202,871
Accumulated amortization:								
Beginning of year	223,256	5,654	44,619	409,404	255,196	-	938,129	729,746
Annual amortization	-	2,827	6,846	161,736	165,648	-	337,057	208,383
End of year	223,256	8,481	51,465	571,140	420,844	-	1,275,186	938,129
Net Book Value, end of year	$ -	$ 19,789	$ 5,922	$ 168,536	$ 1,396,285	$ -	$ 1,590,532	$ 1,264,742

5. Contractual Obligations

Operating Lease - Warehouse

Minimum annual payments under operating leases on property over the next five years are as follows:

2017/18	$ 105,000
2018/19	105,000
2019/20	108,750
2020/21	108,750
2021/22	108,750
Thereafter	330,000

Returning Office Lease

The Saskatoon Meewasin office lease covered the period of January 16, 2017 to April 30, 2017. The monthly lease payment for April 2017 of $1,450 was paid in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

6. Budget and Lapsing of Appropriation

Budget amounts reflected on an expense basis represent funds appropriated by the Legislative Assembly to enable the Chief Electoral Officer to carry out the Office's duties under *The Election Act, 1996*. The amount appropriated for the year was $15,068,000.

The Office follows The Financial Administration Act, 1993 with regards to its spending. If the Office spends less than its appropriation by March 31, the difference is not available to acquire goods and services in the next fiscal year.

7. Pension Plan

The Office participates in a defined contribution pension plan for the benefit of its employees. The Office's financial obligation of the plan is limited to making payments of 7.5% of employees' salaries for current service. Pension costs are not included in these statements as the costs are borne by other agencies (Note 8).

8. Costs Borne by Third Party Agencies

The Office has not been charged with certain administrative costs and employee benefit costs. These costs are borne by the Legislative Assembly Service and the Ministry of Finance. No provision for these costs has been made in these statements.

9. Financial Instruments

The Office's financial instruments include Due from the General Revenue Fund, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, and Accrued Employee Costs. The carrying amount of these instruments approximates fair value due to their immediate or short-term maturity. These instruments have no significant interest rate or credit risk.

10. 2016 General Election Costs

The April 4, 2016 General Election costs were incurred over four fiscal years beginning in 2013-14. Costs incurred in 2016-17 have been reflected in these financial statements.

11. 2017 Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election Costs

The Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election took place on March 2, 2017. The costs of the by-election were covered by the Office's 2016-17 budget appropriation. No additional funding was requested. Due to the timing of the event, some expenses for 2016-17 were estimated. Any difference between estimated and actual expenses will be reflected in 2017-18.

2016 GENERAL ELECTION COSTS

SCHEDULE 1

2016 General Election	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2016 Actual
Salaries and Benefits	$ 942,323	$ 676,839	$ 1,024,755
Contractual Services	1,352,035	560,163	2,702,042
Communications and Advertising	142,000	181,775	2,024,138
Employee Travel	345,300	337,798	661,136
Supplies and Services	3,673,389	3,609,991	4,784,427
Office Rent and Utilities	264,000	247,260	509,361
Equipment	189,880	8,511	477,300
Reimbursement of Election Expenses	4,497,357	3,657,776	-
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	$ 11,406,284	$ 9,280,113	$ 12,183,159

2017 SASKATOON MEEWASIN BY-ELECTION COSTS

SCHEDULE 2

2017 Saskatoon Meewasin By-Election	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2016 Actual
Salaries and Benefits	$ -	$ 18,201	$ -
Contractual Services	-	51,115	-
Communications and Advertising	-	68,656	-
Employee Travel	-	3,470	-
Supplies and Services	-	111,599	-
Office Rent and Utilities	-	5,116	-
Equipment	-	956	-
Reimbursement of Election Expenses	-	126,229	-
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	$ -	$ 385,342	$ -

2014 LLOYDMINSTER BY-ELECTION COSTS

SCHEDULE 3

2014 Lloydminster By-election	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2016 Actual
Salaries and Benefits	$ -	$ -	$ 9
Contractual Services	-	-	276
Communications and Advertising	-	-	2,647
Employee Travel	-	-	(361)
Supplies and Services			(917)
Office Rent and Utilities	-	-	-
Reimbursement of Election Expenses	-	-	1,448
Total Event Expenses (Statement 2)	$ -	$ -	$ 3,102

APPENDIX B: REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

As of March 31, 2017, six political parties are registered in Saskatchewan. Their names, abbreviations, leaders, and chief official agents are recorded in the Register of Political Parties as follows:

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Leader	Chief Official Agent	Website
Saskatchewan Green Party	Saskatchewan Green Party	Shawn Setyo	David Abbey	www.saskgreen.ca
New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Trent Wotherspoon (Interim Leader)	John Tzupa	www.saskndp.ca
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	P.C. Party of Saskatchewan	Rick Swenson	Horizons Publishing & Printing Co. Ltd (Grant Schmidt)	www.pcsask.ca
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	Saskatchewan Liberal Party	Darrin Lamoureux	Gerald Hiebert	www.saskliberals.ca
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	The Saskatchewan Party Fund Inc. (Patrick Bundrock)	www.saskparty.com
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan	WIPSK	Neil Fenske	John Honig	www.wipsk.com

The Political Party Registration Process

Under Section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996*, a political party may apply to be registered at any time between the day fixed for the return to a writ for a general election and the fifth day after the issue of the writ commencing the next general election.

A registration application must be in the prescribed form, accompanied by a complete and accurate petition for registration. Each petition must be signed by at least 2,500 eligible provincial voters. At least 1,000 of these voters must live in at least ten different provincial constituencies, with a minimum of 100 voters in each of those constituencies.

Along with its application and petition, a political party must file:

- A written statement declaring that its primary purpose is to field candidates for election as Members of the Legislative Assembly;
- An audited financial statement; and
- Prescribed information regarding the party's leader, senior officers, chief official agent, and auditor.

Once Elections Saskatchewan has reviewed the political party's registration documentation and vetted its application, the Chief Electoral Officer will register the political party and, in accordance with Section 233 of the Act, publish its name in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*.

APPENDIX C: ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTING BY POLITICAL PARTIES

Under Section 250 of *The Election Act, 1996*, before May 1 each year, the chief official agent of a registered political party must file an audited Fiscal Period Return (Form E-521) detailing the party's financial activities for the preceding calendar year.

All donations of money and commercial value exceeding $250 made during the year by individuals, corporations, trade unions, unincorporated organizations and associations, and any other person or group of persons must be reported on Form E-521. Expenses incurred during an election campaign period are not reported on Form E-521. Under Section 251 of the Act, election expenses are reported on an audited Registered Political Party's Return of Election Expenses (Form E-524).

The following table summarizes the contributions received and expenses incurred by each registered political party for the calendar year 2016.

2016 Calendar Year

Contributions			Expenses			
Registered Political Party	Total Contributions	Cash on Hand	Operating Expenses	Advertising	Other	Total
Saskatchewan Green Party	$ 11,266.22	$ 1,617.58	$ 6,956.25	$ 1,274.90	$ 1,537.86	$ 9,769.01
New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section	2,398,419.81	1,039,097.14	1,095,397.34	277,049.02	212,763.80	1,585,210.16
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	22,833.00	100,180.76	130,677.00	33,993.00	78,896.00	243,566.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	87,655.97	21,239.27	27,677.46	0	123,414.48	151,091.94
Saskatchewan Party	5,740,052.00	1,857,566.00	2,620,990.00	268,860.00	1,717,004.00	4,606,854.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (WIPSK)	4,715.50	0	606.98	0	0	606.98

Note: The information reported in this table is from fiscal returns as filed by the registered political party. Fiscal returns are audited by Elections Saskatchewan and are subject to change. Once audited, fiscal returns are posted on the Elections Saskatchewan website and are marked as "FINAL."

APPENDIX D: SASKATCHEWAN'S POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TAX CREDIT SYSTEM

The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Saskatchewan) (the Tax Credit Act) governs the province's political contributions tax credit system and forms the basis for calculating political contribution tax credits for provincial resident taxpayers under *The Income Tax Act, 2000 (Saskatchewan)*.

Saskatchewan's political contributions tax credit system offers provincial resident taxpayers, including individuals and corporations, the opportunity to claim tax credits based on the eligible contributions they made to a registered political party or independent candidate.

Tax receipts issued by registered political parties or independent candidates must comply with the Tax Credit Act to qualify under the provincial tax act. Specifically, registered political parties and independent candidates may receipt contributions from provincial resident taxpayers when those contributions are used to advance the democratic process in Saskatchewan.

Tax Receipts

Under Section 8 of the Tax Credit Act, official income tax receipts are issued by the chief official agent of a registered political party or by the business manager in the case of an independent candidate.

- The chief official agent's name must be recorded in the Register of Political Parties maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer.
- The business manager is eligible to issue tax receipts only if the returning officer has certified the candidate's nomination under Subsection 48(2) of *The Election Act, 1996*.

Tax receipts may be issued for eligible contributions of $25 or more to a registered political party or independent candidate.

The tax credit available to provincial resident taxpayers is calculated according to the following criteria:

- Where the total eligible contribution is $400 or less, the taxpayer is entitled to claim 75 percent of the total contribution;
- Where the total eligible contribution is more than $400 but not more than $750, the taxpayer is entitled to claim $300 plus 50 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds $400; and
- Where the total eligible contribution is more than $750, the taxpayer is entitled to claim the lesser of $650 or $475 plus 33 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds $750.

APPENDIX E: ANNUAL TAX CREDIT REPORTING

Under Section 13 of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001 (Saskatchewan)* (the Tax Credit Act), on or by the last day of April each year, the chief official agent of a registered political party must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used the preceding calendar year on an Annual Report of Contributions (Registered Political Party) (Form P-602). The reconciliation details the aggregate amount of contributions receipted; the number of tax receipts issued, spoiled or duplicated; and the number of tax receipts retained (unused).

Under Section 12 of the Tax Credit Act, when an independent candidate participates in the province's political contributions tax credit system, the candidate's business manager must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used during the campaign period and the aggregate amount of contributions receipted—on a Campaign Period Report of Contributions (Independent Candidate) (Form P-606).

The following table summarizes the value of the tax receipts issued by each registered political party for the years 2009 through 2016.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIPTED
(CALENDAR YEAR 2009–16)

Registered Political Party	Aggregate Receipted Contributions							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Saskatchewan Green Party	$ 6,600.21	$ 9,686.00	$ 30,353.10	$ 5,697.00	$ 5,950.76	$ 4,503.09	$ 6,379.95	$ 9,857.35
New Democratic Party, Saskatchewan Section	840,413.57	934,275.83	1,039,403.28	788,852.67	924,098.09	816,696.50	931,242.08	1,103,296.88
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	7,055.00	13,274.00	9,922.00	3,810.00	-	8,010.00	10,070.00	22,964.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	93,517.49	76,984.18	76,446.33	37,643.52	28,524.96	28,609.96	38,069.96	75,847.01
Saskatchewan Marijuana Party*	5,772.26	1,700.00	1,941.00	-	-	-	-	-
Saskatchewan Party	1,533,641.63	2,874,216.35	5,613,676.57	3,052,248.65	2,345,394.27	2,413,357.99	3,182,436.61	5,056,304.87
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (WIPSK)	-	2,000.00	650.00	1,460.50	300.00	135.00	160.00	4,597.00
Independent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	$2,487,000.16	$3,912,136.36	$6,772,392.28	$3,889,712.34	$3,304,268.08	$3,271,312.54	$4,168,358.60	$6,272,867.11

*The Saskatchewan Marijuana Party was deregistered effective May 12, 2012.

Note: The political contributions reported as receipted for 2016 in the above table are from fiscal returns as filed by the registered political party. Fiscal returns are audited by Elections Saskatchewan and any revisions to the final figures will be reported in subsequent annual reports.

Appendix E: Annual Tax Credit Reporting (Continued)

The following table presents the aggregate value of the tax receipts issued by all registered political parties for the years 2004 through 2016.

SASKATCHEWAN TAX CREDITS ISSUED FOR POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS (2004-2016)

Tax Year	
2004	$ 1,811,834.88
2005	$ 2,070,248.98
2006	$ 2,383,382.00
2007	$ 6,148,827.10
2008	$ 2,158,018.64
2009	$ 2,487,000.16
2010	$ 3,912,136.36
2011	$ 6,772,392.28
2012	$ 3,889,712.34
2013	$ 3,304,268.08
2014	$ 3,271,312.54
2015	$ 4,168,358.60
2016	$ 6,272,867.11
Total Tax Credits Issued	**$ 48,650,359.07**

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